UNIT 7: FIELDS OF SOCIAL WORK

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7.1. LEARNING OBJECTIVE

The aim of this unit is to provide you with conceptual clarity of fields of social work so that in future you may be able to choose the right specialization and area of interest and engage yourself in the respective field.

After going through this unit you will be able to :

- Understand the meaning of fields of social work;
- Be familiar with different type of social work fields;
- Examine the work and role of social worker in different fields.

7.2. INTRODUCTION

The enduring profession of social work is now in its second century. Grounded in core values, it has withstood major political, social and economic changes over time. The scope of its knowledge and skills continue to grow as the profession responds to developing needs in India and all over the world. It is mandatory for the trainee social workers and practitioners to be familiar with the fields of social work practice. Many social workers are in the forefront, shaping public policies, advancing client interventions, development of different communities, empowering weaker sections or marginalised groups, motivating the human resources in organised sector which comes under any one of the fields. The improvement in the social functioning of the individual is a major objective of Social work (Siddiqqui, 2014). Today the definition of social work is also changing with the changing of socio-political and economic paradigm and some of the new fields have emerged.

"Social Work is a dynamic, practice - based profession and an academic discipline that promotes social change and development, social cohesion and the empowerment and liberation of people. Principles of social justice, human rights, collective responsibility and respect for diversities are central to social work. Underpinned by social work theories of social work, social sciences, humanities and indigenous knowledge, social work engages people and structure to address life challenges and enhance wellbeing"(IASSW,2014).



Principles of social justice : human rights, collective responsibility and respect for diversities are central to social work.

7.3. MEANING AND TYPES OF FIELDS OF SOCIAL WORK

Social work is a human service profession which has various fields. Fields of social work are the areas where social work trainees and professionals may engage themselves to practice social work. The different fields of social work are mentioned below:

7.3.1. Family & Child Welfare

7.3.2. Medical and Psychiatric Social Work

7.3.3. Industrial Social Work

7.3.4. Rural Community Development.

7.3.5. Urban Community Development

7.3.6. Criminology and Justice

7.3.7. Social Welfare Administration

7.3.1 Family & Child Welfare

Family and Child Welfare is one of the most important fields of social work. Children as central to the development discourse and as individuals having rights as citizens is at the core of this thematic area. This approach emanates from an understanding that children have been losing their childhood and spaces for holistic and creative learning and within the current development scenario they are increasingly being viewed and treated as adults, be it as child labour, sex workers or as adult learners in mainstream education. With increasing marginalisation of specific communities like dalits, tribals, minorities and the poor, children and families of these communities face greater vulnerabilities and deprivation. It is the children of these communities who live on the edge, struggling to find ways to survive, protect and educate themselves.They are also the major victims of community violence, development led displacement and disasters.Family and Child Welfare as a field of social work practice has traditionally been concerned with the service needs of children and their families when parental functioning is impaired or when the child, because of developmental, emotional, or behavioural problems, may not be able to function within their family setting. This has resulted in a focus on a protective function. There is an evolving parallel focus on strengthening the family in order to maintain the child within the family. Services are conventionally divided between those provided to children in their own homes and those provided to children

Family and Child Welfare : as a field of social work practice has traditionally been concerned with the service needs of children and their families.

removed from their parents' care and placed in substitute living arrangements. Social workers who specialize in child welfare seek to improve the well-being of children and youth and their families. Family is a system wherein the experience of any one member affects the other members. A drug dependent son, a physically or mentally challenged child, the main earning member having problems at the work place, an elderly father / mother - all affect the social functioning of the family as a whole. Sometimes, the problem faced by one member is an expression of a serious problem with the basic interpersonal relationships, interaction and communication patterns within the family. Most often, families are able to cope with these normal transitions. But, some special situations cause a sense of inadequacy in the families and they are forced to seek professional help. Some of the problems, which put too much strain on family's coping mechanisms, are severe marital discord, domestic violence, child abuse, incest and redundancy (unemployment). Social workers engage themselves in different projects and programmes of government and non-government organizations. These programmes and projects are CHILD LINE services, Integrated Child Development Service(ICDS), Integrated Programme for Street Children, Integrated Child Protection Scheme (ICPS), Mid-day Meal scheme, Nutrition programme for adolescent girls etc.

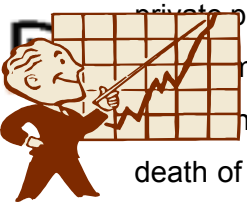
Role of the social worker

- Social workers must ensure that no child is subjected to physical or mental abuse or is harmed or neglected by caretakers or other adults.
- To care and protect the child who are in need and help them to grow physically, mentally and socially like a normal child.
- In addition to protection, child welfare workers are involved in securing safe living environments for children who have been abused or neglected, a process that often includes foster care or adoption.

  Social workers try to better the condition of street children, orphans, destitute children, children in conflict with law, differently able children, and terminal ill children.

7.3.2. Medical and Psychiatric Social Work

Social workers, like doctors and nurses, play an important role in health care settings. Medical social workers serve in hospitals, care facilities, hospices, and public health departments. In hospitals and care facilities, they may counsel patients and their families and are responsible for discharge planning, which include ensuring that patients have needed support services when they leave the medical facility to return home or to go to another care facility. Medical social workers also serve as liaisons between doctors and patients, advocate for patient needs, and conduct training programme for medical personnel. Some social workers are employed by public health agencies, where they develop, implement and evaluate prevention programs. Psychiatric social workers help people through individual, family and group counselling. Although Psychiatric treatment takes place in many fields of practice, psychiatric social workers can primarily be found in community mental health agencies, hospitals and private practice. The goal of the psychiatric social worker is to help people overcome or cope up with mental disorder such as depression or schizophrenia or to address emotional problems such as grief over the death of a loved one. The ultimate goal of medical and psychiatric social work is to help all such individuals' lead full and productive lives. Psychiatric social workers are also involved in preventive social work and work for better mental wellbeing.



The goal of the psychiatric social worker : is to help people overcome or cope up with mental disorder such as depression or schizophrenia or to address emotional problems such as grief over the death of a loved one.

Role of the social worker

- Counsel the patient and his/her family members.
- To help the poor patients economically through fund raising activities.
- To help the patient to take care of himself/ herself in future.
- Conduct awareness and sensitization activities

CHECK YOUR PROGRESS-1

1. Fill in the Blanks:

(a) What is Family and child welfare ?

(b) What is the goal of psychiatric social work ?

7.3.3. Industrial Social Work



Industrial social work has come to be defined as a systematic way of helping individuals and groups towards better adaptation to work situation.

The development of factory system of production with its concentration of men and machines, and the accelerated pace of industrialization have resulted in the gradual ascendency of machinery over men, leading to human neglect and misery. This evolved the concept of labour welfare programmes with the object of looking after the interests of the workers who had been overlooked for long. The oxford dictionary defines labour welfare as "efforts to make life worth living for workmen". A paper submitted on behalf of the Latin American countries to the International Conference of Social Work held at Munich in 1956, described labour welfare as "services rendered to workers and their families by an Industrial enterprise with the purpose of raising their normal material, social and cultural levels and to adjust to a better life". Social workers as a labour welfare officer is responsible for the welfare of the workers in the Industry. It is a statutory responsibility of an employer to appoint a Labour Welfare Officer in his organization if the number of employees exceeds 500 in case of factories and 300 in plantation. According to Saini (1975), Industrial social work has come to be defined as a systematic way of helping individuals and groups towards better adaptation to work situation. These days, the term occupational social work is being increasingly used in developed countries for the reason that the scope of social work can be extended to all kinds and variety of occupations. The latest interpretation goes as follows: 'Occupational social work can be broadly defined as a specialized field of social work practice, which addresses the human and social needs of the work community through a variety of interventions, which aim to foster optimal adaptation between individual and their environments. In this context, occupational social worker may address a wide range of individual and family needs, relationships within organisations and the broader issues of the relationship of the world of work to the community at large (NASW 1987). From the definition, it is clear that no matter by what name we call it, social work, when applied to business and industry, is a utilization of social work knowledge, skills and values to bring about goodness of fit between man and his work environment.

Role of the Social Worker

- Social workers are involved in family, individual and group, counselling and home visit in relation to adjustment of the work orientation, personality and other problems at preventive level.
- He/she actively participates in corporate social responsibility activities and community development initiatives of the industry.
- To provide welfare services to the workers.
- The role of the social worker is to maintain good industrial relations.
- To educate and conduct awareness activities for the workers.

7.3.4. Rural Community Development.

India is a country where 68.84 per cent population live in rural areas (Census 2011). As per the Tendulkar Committee report, the percentage of the population below the poverty line in rural areas was estimated at 41.8 per cent in 2011. Development of the rural areas has been one of the major concerns of the successive Five Year Plans in India. An increase in the productive potential of the rural economy is an essential condition for finding effective solutions to the problems of rural community. The following programmes and schemes have been launched by the government to improve the quality of life in rural areas. These are Integrated Rural Development Programme (IRDP), National Rural Livelihood Mission (NRLM), Rural Housing Indira Awaj Yojana (IAY), National Rural Employment Guarantee Act (NREGA), National Health Mission (NHM) and Swatch Bharat Mission (SBM).The target group consists largely of small and marginal farmers, agricultural labourers and rural artisans living below the poverty line.

Social worker takes up the following activities in respect of the removal of poverty in rural areas.

- Social worker disseminates knowledge on the latest development programmes including actual benefits available under them, their conditions of eligibility, procedural requirements etc.
- He helps the poor in getting the full benefit of these development programmes without any share of the administrative machinery or of the locally influential persons.

- He also helps in changing the attitudes and beliefs of rural people to attribute everything concerning them including poverty to their destiny by convincing them that without action nothing can be attained.

7.3.5. Urban Community Development

India is a country where 31.16 per cent population live in urban areas. The urban population is expected to rise to around 38 percent by 2026. Urban India is fast growing but sometimes in unplanned ways. Urban communities are at critical crossroads. In a technology and market-driven process of development, the expanse of the marginalised and deprived sections of communities has increased. Those who have been historically disadvantaged, who lack land, appropriate skills, higher education and/or other resources, are not able to benefit from the fruits of this so called progress and development. With pro-poor, pro-marginalised perspectives, the concern is with the most 'invisible' groups in urban areas. It is necessary to mobilise them as a first step in order for them to utilise spaces that may exist for them to seek their entitlements and rights. Unless the marginalised are organised and become aware of their rights, sustainable development is not possible. Today, development practitioners whether at the starting level or already in the field, require multiple perspectives to analyse and engage with present day complex realities. There are many problems which are faced by urban communities. To name the more important among them are: pollution, corruption, unemployment, crime and juvenile delinquency, overcrowding and slums, drug addiction and alcoholism, and begging.Development of the urban areas has been one of the major concerns of the successive Five Year Plans in India.The following programmes and schemes have been launched by the government to improve the quality of life in urban areas. Jawaharlal Nehru National Urban Renewal Mission (JNNURM), Integrated Housing and Slum Development Programme (IHSDP) under JNNRUM for slum improvement and rehabilitation, Housing for all by 2022 scheme for urban poor, Smart cities mission, Swatch Bharat Mission (SBM), Atal Mission for Rejuvenation and Urban Transformation (AMRUT) etc.

The urban population is expected to rise to around 38 percent by 2026. Urban India is fast growing but sometimes in unplanned ways.

Role of the Social worker

- Social worker disseminates knowledge of various recent development programmes including actual benefits available under them, their conditions of eligibility, procedural requirements etc.
- He helps the poor in getting the full benefit of these development programmes without any share of the administrative machinery or of the locally influential persons.
- He also helps in changing the attitudes and beliefs of urban poor people to attribute everything concerning them including poverty to their destiny by convincing them that without action nothing can be attained.

7.3.6. Criminology and Justice

Social workers fill a variety of roles in both the juvenile and adult criminal justice system. They are involved in juvenile and adult probation and parole. Social work in the thematic field of Criminology and Justice provides immense opportunity to examine and work with actors and institutions dealing with crime, law and justice from a rights-based perspective. The primary goal of the criminal justice system is to maintain public safety and punish lawbreakers by confining and controlling them (Miller 1995). With the emphasis on control and punishment, is the criminal justice system a place for social workers? Some of the most dedicated and idealist social workers answer this question with an impassioned yes!

Social work in a criminal justice system covers an enormous amount of territory. Social workers specialize in juvenile corrections, rehabilitation in the adult correctional system, case management and counselling services in probation and parole, police social work and victim assistance services. They are most often employed by central and state governments, non-profit victim assistance agencies or lobbies. Regardless of setting, criminal justice social workers advocate for public policies that address poverty, unemployment and hopelessness.

Today, the Indian justice system is characterised by innumerable arrests, over crowded jails, and courts with lakhs of pending cases. Despite

Social work in a criminal justice system covers an enormous amount of territory. Social workers specialize in juvenile corrections, rehabilitation in the adult correctional system, case management and counselling services in probation and parole, police social work and victim assistance services.

these realities, there is a significant traditional indifference towards criminal justice. It is the poor, the unemployed, the visible minorities, the powerless, and those ostracised for their sexual orientation that are most frequently criminalised by the system. Understanding that the law and its application are frequently biased, the marginalised may behave in ways that bring them into direct conflict with the law. The presence of social work in the administration of justice has, thus, become a valuable component of practice for the profession itself, as well as an important influence on justice agencies.

Role of social worker

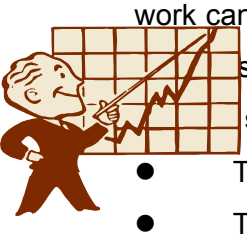
- They can play a key role in engaging with the State actors and the victim groups in ensuring justice and accessing rehabilitative structures.
- They need to interface with a diversity of issues in practice situations.
- Their engagement with the justice system will impact the situation of offenders, victims, disputants, persons released from custodial institutions, vulnerable groups rescued from exploitative situations and those who are prone to criminalisation or victimisation.
- They can be involved in a range of interventions such as counselling, liaison with the family/community structures and the administration, providing outreach services, pre-litigation work, conflict resolution, and community-based rehabilitation work.

7.3.7. Social Welfare Administration

Social welfare administration is both a method and a field of social work. Social welfare administration as a field of social work is like an ocean where the practitioners can devote their life. Social welfare aims at the well-being and improvement of life of individuals in general and alleviating the sufferings and ameliorating the lot of the destitute, deprived disadvantaged and under privileged sections of society in particular. These sections are women, children, Scheduled Tribes, Scheduled Casts, differently abled, and older adults. In India, social welfare administration is being carried out by a number of agencies - formal and informal, governmental and non-governmental,

multilateral and bilateral at central, state and local levels. Apart from it, there are number of social welfare agencies like United Nations Economic and Social Councils, Regional Commissions and specialised agencies like ILO,WHO,UNESCO, UNICEF, etc. and International non-governmental agencies like the Red Cross, OXFAM, CARE etc. All are interested in the promotion of social welfare in developing countries by providing financial and technical assistance for their various welfare programmes. Administration is the core for the implementation of policies and requirements of social welfare. Social welfare administration is described as the administration of the social welfare programmes.

The main job of social welfare administration is to identify and clarify the problems of particular territory and contribute possible solutions to the problems. But we must be aware of the fact that the success of social welfare ultimately depends on the adequacy to administrate or the administrative apparatus prevailing in the country.The students of social work can engage themselves to those welfare agencies to provide to the sections of the society.



social worker

- To involve in the planning process.
- To identify the needs and the problems systematically before implementing social welfare programmes.
- To help the government and other agencies in different stages while implementing the projects and programmes.
- To review and monitor the programmes and projects for weaker and most marginalised groups.

CHECK YOUR PROGRESS-2

1. State True or False

(a) Medical Social worker does not help the poor patients economically through fund raising activities.

(b) It is a statutory responsibility of an employer to appoint a Labour Welfare Officer in his organization if the number of employees exceeds 300 in case of factories and 500 in plantation.



ACTIVITY 1

Sit in the group (5-7 members) and each member should choose one field where you want to engage yourself in future and explain about the field and the reason that you want to work. (Each member may take 7 to 10 minute's time).



7.5 LET US SUM UP

In this unit we have understood the meaning of fields in social work. We have also become familiar with different types of fields of social work. These are Family & Child Welfare, Medical and Psychiatric Social Work, Criminology and Justice, Industrial Social Work, Rural Community Development, Urban Community Development, and Social Welfare Administration. We have also come to know about different types of programmes, projects and schemes of government which are interrelated to the fields of social work. Moreover we have also come to know the role of social worker in these specialized fields.



7.6 FURTHER READING

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7.7 ANSWERS TO CHECK YOUR PROGRESS

CHECK YOUR PROGRESS-1

a) Family and Child Welfare as a field of social work practice has traditionally been concerned with the service needs of children and their families.

b) The ultimate goal of medical and psychiatric social work is to help all such individuals' lead full and productive lives. Psychiatric social workers are also involved in preventive social work and work for better mental wellbeing.

CHECK YOUR PROGRESS-1

a) False b) True



7.8 MODEL QUESTIONS

1. What do you mean by fields of social work?
2. Mention any four fields of social work.
3. What is the importance of understanding different types of fields in social work?
4. What are the functions of NRLM ?
5. Explain the scope of criminology and justice in social work progression

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